

certain former spouses of deceased Hmong veterans.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 5234

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. EXTENSION OF HMONG VETERANS' NATURALIZATION ACT OF 2000 TO CERTAIN FORMER SPOUSES OF DECEASED HMONG VETERANS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 2 of the Hmong Veterans' Naturalization Act of 2000 (Public Law 106-207; 114 Stat. 316; 8 U.S.C. 1423 note) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking "or" at the end;

(2) in paragraph (2), by striking the period at the end and inserting "; or"; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

"(3) who—

"(A) satisfies the requirement of paragraph (1)(A); and

"(B) is the surviving spouse of a person described in paragraph (1)(B) which described person was killed or died in Laos, Thailand, or Vietnam."

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 3 of such Act is amended by striking "or (2)" and inserting ", (2), or (3)".

(c) DEADLINE FOR APPLICATION.—Section 6 of such Act is amended by adding at the end the following new sentence: "In the case of a person described in section 2(3), the application referred to in the preceding sentence, and appropriate fees, shall be filed not later than 18 months after the date of the enactment of this sentence."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this year Congress enacted legislation facilitating naturalization for Hmong veterans who were admitted to the United States as refugees. Recruited to assist our combat effort in Indochina, the Hmong had made great sacrifices on our behalf and faced persecution because of their association with us.

Many Hmong in the United States today continue to face unique language problems that can be traced to the fact that they grew up in a predominantly preliterate society without educational opportunities. By enacting Public Law 106-207, the Hmong Veterans Naturalization Act of 2000, this Congress very appropriately sought to remove insurmountable obstacles to citizen-

ship by providing an exemption from the English language requirement and authorizing special consideration relating to the civics requirement. The potential beneficiaries, Hmong veterans and spouses who came to the United States as refugees, were limited to 45,000.

The bill before us today corrects an omission in Public Law 106-207's description of spouses without raising the ceiling on total potential beneficiaries. Under H.R. 5234, surviving spouses of Hmong who served with special guerrilla units or irregular forces and were killed or died in Laos, Thailand or Vietnam can qualify for facilitated naturalization.

□ 1445

The equities in favor of helping these widows certainly are as great as the equities in favor of helping widows who already benefit from Public Law 106-207, namely, those whose husbands were able to apply for refugee status and make it to the United States. The widows in both groups are living permanently in this country after having been admitted as refugees.

The surviving spouses we seek to help now, like the widows who benefited from Public Law 106-207, are survivors of those who made common cause with us at great personal peril to themselves and their families.

I commend the gentleman from California (Mr. RADANOVICH) for introducing this important bill and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. VENTO), the author of the bill that became Public Law 106-207 and the cosponsor of H.R. 5234, who also deserves great credit for his tireless efforts on behalf of the Hmong over the years.

This is a humane measure that merits the support of my colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, as is his custom, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE) has given a very, very thorough explanation of this bill, and I concur with what the gentleman has said.

Mr. Speaker, this is an important bill because the Hmong have stood by the U.S. at a crucial time in our history and now is the time to repay and honor the loyalty of Hmong veterans. The Hmong were a pre-literate society. They had no written language in use when the United States recruited them during the Vietnam War. The best symbol of why H.R. 5234 is necessary is the Hmong "story cloth," the Pandau cloth, that is their embroidered cloth record of important historical events and oral traditions.

Mr. Speaker, I approve of the new correction language which allows the spouses of the Hmong veterans who made it to the United States, but for whatever reason their husbands did not and remained in Laos. This additional correction which is being initiated by the House will waive the language and civics

requirements for these widows who have been granted legal permanent residency.

I join Chairman SMITH and the Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Immigration and Claims in commending the Lao Veterans of America for its tireless efforts for the Hmong. I too also commend our colleague, the gentleman from Minnesota, Mr. VENTO, for his sponsorship of this legislation.

The Hmong were critical to the American war strategy in S.E. Asia—especially the U.S. air strategy. Mr. Speaker, this legislation provides for the expedited naturalization of Hmong veterans of the U.S. Secret Army currently residing in the United States (as legal aliens) who served with U.S. clandestine and special forces during the Vietnam War by allowing them to take the citizenship test with a translator since the Hmong are a tribal people with no written language, thus relying solely on the "story cloths".

The bill is capped at 45,000, in terms of the total of number of Hmong veterans, their widows and orphans who currently reside in the United States who would fall under the legislation. This correction legislation will not count against the cap. This cap is supported by the Hmong veterans in the United States and is considered to be a generous cap. I support this legislation to provide relief to the Hmong heroes.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support for H.R. 5234, the Hmong Veterans Naturalization Act. I commend Representative RADANOVICH, the gentleman from California, for crafting this important bill.

The spouses of the brave Hmong freedom fighters who were our allies during the Vietnam War deserve to be given special consideration for naturalization. The Hmong Veterans Naturalization Act, H.R. 371 was signed into law on May 26 of this year. That historic legislation assists Hmong and Laotian veterans of the U.S. secret army that fought in Laos. Currently, however, several thousand Laotian and Hmong widows living in the United States whose husbands died in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War were excluded under the new law. H.R. 5234 would rectify this problem.

It is the very least that we can do for these people who had to flee their homeland because they protected our downed fighter pilots and fought by the sides of our soldiers.

Accordingly, I urge our colleagues to support H.R. 5234.

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 5234, legislation to amend the Hmong Veterans' Naturalization Act of 2000.

I am pleased with the passage of H.R. 5234, the Hmong Veterans' Naturalization Act, and the president signing it into law. It was a necessary step in assisting the Hmong, a special group of legal immigrants who served with the U.S. Armed Forces and now require help in obtaining U.S. citizenship. It waives the residency requirement for those Hmong and their spouses. Additionally, it waives the English language test and residency requirement for attainment of U.S. citizenship.

The Hmong Veterans' Naturalization was an important piece of legislation that will impact thousands of people in the United States, including the large Lao-Hmong community in my home district of western Wisconsin. H.R.

5234, however, extends the applicability of the Hmong Veterans' Naturalization Act to widows of the veterans covered by that law. They were inadvertently left out under the original legislation. Under this measure, therefore, the widows of those veterans would be exempt from certain citizenship requirements. This bill will help many more Hmong families and that is why I support this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, the Hmong people need our help. It is wrong to abandon these men and women who served as valuable allies to us during the Southeastern Asian conflict. I urge all my colleagues to support this legislation. And I want to especially commend and thank Representative BRUCE VENTO for his leadership and hard work on behalf of the Hmong and this legislation. I'm sure all my colleagues join me in wishing him a speedy recovery and a happy retirement.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, this is an important bill because the Hmong have stood by the U.S. at a crucial time in our history and now is the time to repay and honor the loyalty of Hmong veterans. The Hmong were a pre-literate society. They had no written language in use when the United States recruited them during the Vietnam War. The best symbol of why H.R. 5234 is necessary is the Hmong "story cloth," the Pandau cloth, that is their embroidered cloth record of important historical events and oral traditions.

Mr. Speaker, I approve of the new correction language which allows the spouses of the Hmong veterans who made it to the United States, but for whatever reason their husbands did not and they remained in Laos. This additional correction which is being initiated by the House will waive the language and civics requirements for these widows who have been granted legal permanent residency.

I join Chairman SMITH in commending the Lao Veterans of America for its tireless efforts for the Hmong. I too also commend our colleague, the gentleman from Minnesota, Mr. VENTO, for his sponsorship of this legislation.

The Hmong were critical to the American war strategy in S.E. Asia—especially the U.S. air strategy. Mr. Speaker, this legislation provides for the expedited naturalization of Hmong veterans of the U.S. Secret Army currently residing in the United States (as legal aliens) who served with U.S. clandestine and special forces during the Vietnam War by allowing them to take the citizenship test with a translator since the Hmong are a tribal people with no written language, thus relying solely on the "story cloths." The bill is capped at 45,000, in terms of the total of number of Hmong veterans, their widows and orphans who currently reside in the United States who would fall under this legislation. This correction legislation will not count against the cap. This cap is supported by the Hmong veterans in the United States and is considered to be a generous cap. I support this legislation to provide relief to the Hmong heroes.

Mr. VENTO. Mr. Speaker, I support H.R. 5234, a measure that would extend the applicability of the Hmong Veteran's Naturalization Act (PL 106-207) to widows of the veterans covered by that law.

As I've stated in the past, the Lao-Hmong people stood honorably by the United States at a critical time in our nation's history. Ap-

proximately 60,000 Lao-Hmong know the Minnesota region as their new home and I have long championed efforts to help ease their adjustment into our society. Many of the older Lao-Hmong patriots who made it to the U.S. are separated from their family members and have had a difficult time adjusting to many aspects of life and culture in the U.S., including passing aspects of the required citizenship test.

I appreciate the efforts of those in my district and nationwide to clarify an unintended oversight of the Hmong Veteran's Naturalization Act. Clearly, this Congress did not intend to exclude the widows of those veterans who sacrificed for our country. It is my hope that this technical bill will clear the confusion, and that the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and Department of Justice (DOJ) will work to ensure full and proper implementation of the language and spirit of this law.

I was greatly heartened when my colleagues joined me earlier this year to stand with the Lao-Hmong in their struggle to become U.S. citizens and to live a good life in the United States. We were right to recognize their dedication and service. Now we must guarantee that no one is inadvertently left out. I strongly urge your support of this bill.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5234.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess for approximately 10 minutes.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 55 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess for approximately 10 minutes.

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AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD) at 2 o'clock and 58 minutes p.m.

SMALL BUSINESS INNOVATION RESEARCH PROGRAM REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2000

Mrs. KELLY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 590) providing for the concurrence by the House with an amendment in the amendment of the Senate to H.R. 2392.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 590

Resolved, That upon the adoption of this resolution the House shall be considered to have taken from the Speaker's table the bill H.R. 2392, with the amendment of the Senate thereto, and to have concurred in the amendment of the Senate with an amendment as follows:

In lieu of the matter proposed to be inserted by the amendment of the Senate, insert the following:

SECTION 1. TABLE OF CONTENTS.

The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Table of contents.

TITLE I—SMALL BUSINESS INNOVATION RESEARCH PROGRAM

Sec. 101. Short title.

Sec. 102. Findings.

Sec. 103. Extension of SBIR program.

Sec. 104. Annual report.

Sec. 105. Third phase assistance.

Sec. 106. Report on programs for annual performance plan.

Sec. 107. Output and outcome data.

Sec. 108. National Research Council reports.

Sec. 109. Federal agency expenditures for the SBIR program.

Sec. 110. Policy directive modifications.

Sec. 111. Federal and State technology partnership program.

Sec. 112. Mentoring networks.

Sec. 113. Simplified reporting requirements.

Sec. 114. Rural outreach program extension.

TITLE II—GENERAL BUSINESS LOAN PROGRAM

Sec. 201. Short title.

Sec. 202. Levels of participation.

Sec. 203. Loan amounts.

Sec. 204. Interest on defaulted loans.

Sec. 205. Prepayment of loans.

Sec. 206. Guarantee fees.

Sec. 207. Lease terms.

TITLE III—CERTIFIED DEVELOPMENT COMPANY PROGRAM

Sec. 301. Short title.

Sec. 302. Women-owned businesses.

Sec. 303. Maximum debenture size.

Sec. 304. Fees.

Sec. 305. Premier certified lenders program.

Sec. 306. Sale of certain defaulted loans.

Sec. 307. Loan liquidation.

TITLE IV—CORRECTIONS TO THE SMALL BUSINESS INVESTMENT ACT OF 1958

Sec. 401. Short title.

Sec. 402. Definitions.

Sec. 403. Investment in small business investment companies.

Sec. 404. Subsidy fees.

Sec. 405. Distributions.

Sec. 406. Conforming amendment.

TITLE V—REAUTHORIZATION OF SMALL BUSINESS PROGRAMS

Sec. 501. Short title.

Sec. 502. Reauthorization of small business programs.

Sec. 503. Additional reauthorizations.

TITLE VI—MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

Sec. 601. Loan application processing.

Sec. 602. Application of ownership requirements.

Sec. 603. Eligibility for HUBZone program.

Sec. 604. Subcontracting preference for veterans.

Sec. 605. Small business development center program funding.

Sec. 606. Surety bonds.

TITLE I—SMALL BUSINESS INNOVATION RESEARCH PROGRAM

SECTION 101. SHORT TITLE.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This title may be cited as the "Small Business Innovation Research Program Reauthorization Act of 2000".